

**In the Claims:**

Please amend the claims as follows:

**CLAIMS**

1. (Currently amended) A beam optical component ~~(1; 201)~~ for acting on a charged particle beam, ~~(63)~~ including comprising:

a first element ~~(3; 203)~~ having a first opening ~~(9; 209)~~ for acting on said charged particle beam ~~(63)~~;

at least ~~[[a]]~~ one second element ~~(5; 205)~~ for acting on said charged particle beam ~~(63)~~;

a ~~[[at]]~~ least one first distance piece ~~(20a, 20b, 20e)~~ positioned between said first element ~~(3; 203)~~ and said at least one second element ~~(5; 205)~~ to provide for a minimum distance between said first element ~~(3; 203)~~ and said second element ~~(5; 205)~~; and

a first holding piece ~~(30a; 30b; 30e)~~ for abutting said first element ~~(3; 203)~~ to said at least one first distance piece ~~(20a, 20b, 20e)~~, whereby wherein said first holding piece ~~(30a; 30b; 30e)~~ is attached to said at least one first distance piece ~~(20a, 20b, 20e)~~.

2. (Currently amended) The beam optical component ~~(1; 201)~~ according to of claim 1, further comprising a second holding piece ~~(32a; 32b; 32e)~~ for abutting said second element ~~(5; 205)~~ to the at least one first distance piece ~~(20a, 20b, 20e)~~.

3. (Currently amended) The beam optical component ~~(1; 201)~~ according to of claim 2, whereby wherein the second holding piece ~~(32a; 32b; 32e)~~ is attached to the at least one first distance piece ~~(20a, 20b, 20e)~~.

4. (Currently amended) The beam optical component ~~(1; 201)~~ according to of claim 1 any one of the previous claims, whereby wherein the at least one second element ~~(5; 205)~~ has a first structured portion ~~(10; 15; 210)~~ to be aligned to said first opening ~~(9; 209)~~.

5. (Currently amended) The beam optical component (1; 201) ~~according to claims of~~ claim 4, ~~whereby~~ wherein the first structured portion (10; 15; 210) comprises a second opening (10; 210) to act on the charged particle beam.

6. (Currently amended) The beam optical component (1; 201) ~~according to~~ of claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims,~~ further comprising a third element (7) having a second structured portion (11; 17) to be aligned to the first opening (9; 209).

7. (Currently amended) The beam optical component (1; 201) ~~according to claim 5~~ of claim 6, ~~whereby~~ wherein the second structured portion (11; 17) comprises a third opening (14) to act on the charged particle beam.

8. (Currently amended) A beam optical component for acting on a charged particle beam, comprising:

a first element having a first opening for acting on said charged particle beam;

at least one second element for acting on said charged particle beam;

a first distance piece positioned between said first element and said at least one second element to provide for a minimum distance between said first element and said second element;

a first holding piece for abutting said first element to said first distance piece,

wherein said first holding piece is attached to said first distance piece;

a third element having a second structured portion to be aligned to the first opening;  
and

~~The beam optical component (1; 201) according to claim 5 or 6, comprising a further at least one second distance piece (22a; 22b; 22e) to define a minimum distance between the second element (5; 205) and the third element (7).~~

9. (Currently amended) The beam optical component (1; 201) ~~according to~~ of claim 8 ~~[[7]],~~ comprising a third holding piece (34a; 34b; 34e) for abutting the second element (5; 205) to the further at least one second distance piece (22a; 22b; 22e).

10. (Currently amended) The beam optical component (1; 201) ~~according to~~ of claim 9 ~~claim 7 or 8~~, comprising a fourth holding piece (36a; 36b; 36c) for abutting the third element (7) to the second ~~further at least one~~ distance piece (22a; 22b; 22c).

11. (Currently amended) The beam optical component (1; 201) ~~according to~~ of claim 10 ~~any one of the preceding claims, whereby wherein~~ the at least one first distance piece (20a; 20b; 20c) and/or or the further at least one second distance piece (22a; 22b; 22c) are each three distance pieces.

12. (Currently amended) The beam optical component (1; 201) ~~according to~~ of claim 10 ~~any one of the preceding claims, whereby wherein~~ the at least one first distance piece (20a; 20b; 20c) and/or or the further at least one second distance piece (22a; 22b; 22c) are spherically shaped.

13. (Currently amended) The beam optical component (1; 201) ~~according to~~ of claim 10 ~~any one of the preceding claims, whereby wherein~~ the at least one first distance piece (20a; 20b; 20c) and/or or the further at least one second distance piece (22a; 22b; 22c) are spherically shaped bodies having at least one waist to reduce the lateral extension of the sphere.

14. (Currently amended) The beam optical component (1; 201) ~~according to~~ of claim 9 ~~any one of the preceding claims, whereby wherein~~ the first, second and/or or third holding piece (30a; 30b; 30c; 32a; 32b; 32c; 34a; 34b; 34c; 36a; 36b; 36c) includes comprises a pin, a holding screw (50), a setscrew (51) or a notched pin (57) sticked inserted into the respective distance piece (20a; 20b; 20c; 22a; 22b; 22c) for the attachment of the first, second and/or or third holding piece (30a; 30b; 30c; 32a; 32b; 32c; 34a; 34b; 34c; 36a; 36b; 36c) to the respective distance piece (20a; 20b; 20c; 22a; 22b; 22c).

15. (Currently amended) The beam optical component (1; 201) ~~according to~~ of claim 9 ~~any one of the preceding claims, whereby wherein~~ the first, second and/or or third holding piece (30a; 30b; 30c; 32a; 32b; 32c; 34a; 34b; 34c; 36a; 36b; 36c) includes comprises respective nuts (50; 52) for abutting the respective electrode to the respective distance piece.

16. (Currently amended) The beam optical component (1; 201) ~~according to~~ of claim 9 ~~any one of the preceding claims, whereby wherein~~ the first, second and/or or third holding piece (30a; 30b; 30c; 32a; 32b; 32c; 34a; 34b; 34c; 36a; 36b; 36c) includes comprises springs (50; 53) for abutting the respective first, second and/or or third element to the first ~~at least one and/or or~~ the further ~~at least one~~ second distance piece at predetermined pressures.

17. (Currently amended) The beam optical component (1; 201) ~~according to~~ of claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims, whereby wherein~~ the first, second and/or or third elements (3; 5; 7) are respective first, second and/or or third electrodes.

18. (Currently amended) The beam optical component (1; 201) ~~according to~~ of claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding, whereby wherein~~ the first, second and/or or third elements (203; 205) are respective first, second and/or or third pole pieces.

19. (Currently amended) A charged particle beam device comprising ~~having~~ a beam optical component, the beam optical component comprising:

a first element having a first opening for acting on said charged particle beam;

at least one second element for acting on said charged particle beam;

a first distance piece positioned between said first element and said at least one second element to provide for a minimum distance between said first element and said second element; and

a first holding piece for abutting said first element to said first distance piece, wherein said first holding piece is attached to said first distance piece.

according to any one of the previous claims claim 1.